

# Town of Tiverton



## Economic Development Commission

343 Highland Road, Tiverton Rhode Island 02878

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### MEETING MINUTES

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ORGANIZATION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

DATE AND TIME: APRIL 11, 2013 @ 6:00PM

LOCATION: TIVERTON COMMUNITY CENTER  
346 JUDSON STREET  
TIVERTON, RI 02878

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Chairman Scott Humphrey called the regular meeting of the Tiverton Economic Development Commission to order at 6:00 P.M. Other members present were: Leonard Schmidt, Susan Gill and Jonathan Cottrell. Vice Chairman Thomas Humphrey was absent.

#### **Item # 1 Approval of minutes meeting of March 2013**

Mr. Cottrell made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Gill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Cottrell, Ms. Gill, Mr. Humphrey and Mr. Schmidt voted in favor of the motion.

Item #8 was taken out of order.

#### **Item # 2 Finalize the talking points and conceptual illustration of the mailer to be added to the property tax invoices.**

Mr. Schmidt reviewed the draft format, which would be one page – two sides. He suggested that the theme would be “Why are we interested in Economic Development?”. He stated that the mailer could provide education regarding ways to raise funds for the Town through development of the tax base. He noted that (under today’s tax rate), an increase in the tax base by \$50 million would increase revenue by \$949,000 per year. A \$100 million increase in the base would increase revenue by \$1.9 million per year, or 4.3%. In addition, development of the base could yield increased employment, quality of life and an increased standard of living.

Mr. Schmidt estimated printing cost at \$800-\$1,000, and noted that the deadline is May 21. Mr. Humphrey suggested including the EDC’s goals in the mailer, including increased commercial tax revenue and a stabilized residential tax rate. Mr. Schmidt noted that an emphasis should also be put on protecting the quality of life and conformance with the Comprehensive Community Plan. Mr. Humphrey suggested that this conversation should continue at a workshop in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Schmidt stated that he would consult with Mr. T. Humphrey. Mr. Gerlach asked what the call to action would be. Mr. Humphrey replied that the EDC would like

to direct people to its website and get them signed up for the newsletter. Mr. Schmidt suggested that a letter to the editor would also be in order.

**Item #3          Discuss the Four Corners Merchant Group's request to add their promotional video onto the TEDC's website.**

Mr. Humphrey stated that the EDC had been asked to attach a Four Corner's promotional video to the EDC website, and that this item was on the agenda for vetting. Ms. Gill noted that the video was promoting a destination. Mr. Humphrey stated that he wanted to be clear about what would and would not be allowed on the website. He stated that he would also check with Town Administrator James Goncalo and Town Solicitor Andrew Teitz. Discussion ensued regarding encouraging the formation of business associations in other areas of Town. Mr. Cottrell made a motion to allow the video, contingent upon approval by Mr. Goncalo and Mr. Teitz. He noted that any other requests would be considered on an ad-hoc basis pending the implementation of a formal policy on the matter. Mr. Humphrey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Humphrey, Ms. Gill, Mr. Cottrell and Mr. Schmidt voted in favor.

**Item #4          Discuss the need to have TEDC representation at key town meetings. SRH will hand out a list of boards and commissions for review.**

The list was reviewed and assignments were tentatively set. Discussion ensued regarding tourism, and it was agreed that this topic would appear on a future agenda.

**Item #5          Update from the Town Planner regarding the "comprehensive community plan"**

Ms. Michaud gave a brief update, noting that the Comprehensive Community Plan's mandatory 5-year update would be kicking off shortly with the appointment of a committee. She noted that all relevant Boards and Commissions (EDC included) would be asked to furnish a committee member.

**Item #6          Update from the Town Planner regarding the "challenge grant"**

A very brief update was given. The draft was almost ready for release, at which time there would be one more public open house. This would be followed by review by the Planning Board and a public hearing by the Town Council.

**Item #7          Update from the Town Planner regarding the "enterprise zone"**

Ms. Michaud stated that a resolution had been passed by the Town Council in support of legislation that would restore applicability of the Enterprise Zone Tax Credit program to smaller businesses. (Currently only "C" corps are eligible.) Ms. Michaud noted that while many local groups were supporting the legislation (including the Newport County Chamber of Commerce) there was no support for the legislation from the Providence Chamber of Commerce.

**Item #8          New Business and Economic Development Items and Updates of Interest – All**

**A. EBEC Update:** This item was taken out of order. Garry Plunkett and Dennis Culbertson, Tiverton's delegates to EBEC (East Bay Energy Consortium) were present to give an update. Mr. Plunkett described the legislation that was passed by the State allowing for each community to generate and sell 3.5 MW of power at

retail. As a result of this incentive, EBEC was formed by several East Bay communities. EBEC identified the Tiverton Industrial Park as a potential location for wind turbines and funds were obtained in order to perform a study as to the preferred location and type of turbine.

Mr. Plunkett noted that in the interim the legislation had changed, and was no longer as favorable for communities (power is no longer sold at a retail rate). Other intervening factors include a reduction in the price of electricity (due to the reduction in the price of natural gas) as well as political opposition to the concept. Mr. Plunkett noted that a survey was performed in Town, with approximately 1,000 respondents. Mr. Plunkett stated that approximately 83% of respondents thought that wind turbines would be a good idea for the Industrial Park. He added that the location of the Industrial Park, in close proximity to a substation and not in a residential area, also made it desirable. Mr. Plunkett noted that the cost of commercial development within the park would be very high, and that in Europe turbines coexist with Industrial uses.

Mr. Plunkett stated that legislation proposed for EBEC last year did not pass. He opined that this means that the opportunity has passed. He stated that if wind energy is still in the realm of possibility for the Industrial Park, he and Mr. Culbertson would like to help. Discussion ensued. Mr. Plunkett noted that he had worked with the Planning Board to come up with a wind turbine ordinance, which was put on hold pending state guidelines. Statewide Planning and URI had both done their own studies. The Town's moratorium on turbines is still in effect.

Mr. Plunkett stated that a 6-month extension on the meteorological tower in the Park had just been granted, at the end of which there would be a full 2 years of data available. With this data, income could be very accurately predicted. Mr. Humphrey asked who owns the data. Mr. Plunkett replied that it was owned by the RIEDC, and that EBEC's position is that the data was paid for with public funds for a public purpose, and that the data would not be released to a private company. He opined that Tiverton would probably be given the data if requested. Discussion ensued regarding public vs. private wind turbine development.

Mr. Humphrey inquired about the political opposition to wind energy generation. Mr. Plunkett noted that there was a third option to public or private development – an ESCO (Energy Service Company). Mr. Humphrey inquired about revenue projections. Mr. Plunkett and Mr. Culbertson replied that the PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) was estimated at \$5,000 per turbine per year, plus a lease payment. He stated that over 20 years (the estimated life of the turbines) there would be a couple of million dollars in revenue. Mr. Plunkett stated that EBEC has the numbers, but that much of it was dependent on the cost of power. Maintenance was briefly discussed. The EDC members thanked Mr. Plunkett and Mr. Culbertson for their time.

**B. RIPTA Meeting:** Mr. Cottrell stated that he had attended a recent RIPTA (RI Public Transit Authority) meeting held at Town Hall to discuss restoration of public transit to Tiverton / Little Compton. Mr. Cottrell distributed copies of the presentation that was given and recapped the meeting.

**C. Tiverton Crossings** Ms. Michaud noted that a large mixed-use development had recently been proposed, and would be discussed at an April 29 joint Planning Board / Town Council meeting. She stated that she had copies of the plan if anyone would like to look at them.

**D. Miscellaneous** Mr. Humphrey noted that he needed headshots of Ms. Gill and Mr. Cottrell for the website.

**Item #9          Next Meeting Schedule, Agenda and Adjournment**

The next meeting would be held on May 9, 2013.

Mr. Cottrell made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Schmidt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Gill, Mr. Humphrey, Mr. Cottrell and Mr. Schmidt voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Submitted by: Kate Michaud      Approval Date: May 9, 2013